



Association of California Water Agencies

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October 29, 2003

***Via Facsimile and Hand
Delivery***

Michael J. Spear, Interim Director
California Department of Water Resources
P.O. Box 942836, Room 1115-1
Sacramento, CA 94236-0001

Subject: Comments of the Association of California Water Agencies
Regarding the California Water Plan Update 2003: An
Investment Guide for California's Water Future - Stakeholder
Briefing Draft, September 30, 2003

Dear Mr. Spear:

The Association of California Water Agencies (ACWA) is very concerned about the recent release of the "Stakeholder Briefing Draft" of the California Water Plan Update 2003: An Investment Guide for California's Water Future. More importantly, we are very concerned about some fundamental problems with the message and tone of the document, and especially its Executive Summary, all of which need to be corrected before the next draft is released.

As you may know, the Association of California Water Agencies (ACWA) is represented directly and indirectly by individuals who serve on The Department of Water Resources' Advisory Committee. These individuals and their agencies have devoted extensive time and expertise to this effort over the last three years. ACWA is concerned that many substantive questions, concerns and suggestions by the Advisory Committee

on a partial August draft of this document were not addressed, nor where they incorporated into the document before its premature public release as the so-called “Stakeholder Briefing Draft”. We believe that this has undercut the contributions of the Advisory Committee members, and the value of the document. We urge DWR to take seriously and fully address the comments that have been, and will be submitted by members of the Advisory Committee before releasing subsequent drafts of the document.

We do not believe it is in the public interest to adhere to the aggressive staff schedule for a “final” public draft of the California Water Plan Update 2003 by December 31, 2003, since we believe that the credibility of the process and the document itself will be sacrificed by such a schedule.

Of even greater concern than the process and schedule are the actual contents and tone of this “Stakeholder Briefing Draft”. We offer the following points that should be addressed in any subsequent drafts.

- The “Investment Guide” table needs substantial improvements to adequately reflect matters of implementation, timing and relative benefits of various resource management strategies. We are concerned that the “implementation confidence” characterization is subjective, yet the text implies some analytical rigor and group consensus that does not exist.
- The document needs to be substantially edited for objectivity and to specifically correct unsubstantiated assertions and ideological biases against certain types of water development while clearly favoring other new sources of supply. The document needs to better articulate the states’ support for all aspects of the CalFed program. That means clearly identifying CalFed actions wherever they are clearly fundamental to relevant statements of state water policy in the Water Plan (such as joint operation of the State Water Project and the Central Valley Project).
- The next draft should make some attempt to incorporate and fully articulate a rigorous approach to addressing environmental water use that places some bounds on environmental water allocations, beyond which there are diminishing returns. The document should also

identify those environmental uses that require large allocations of water where there is not scientific consensus and identify a process for analysis of those uses. There should also be a concrete commitment

to developing the modeling capabilities needed to produce a quantitative analysis of such uses for the 2008 Update.

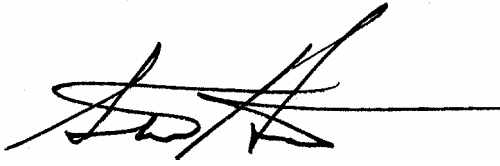
- We support and applaud the emphasis on the critical role that regions play and the need for the state to provide appropriate support. This needs to be strengthened to articulate a “partnership commitment” between the state and the regions based on complementary roles and responsibilities. This partnership commitment should describe the need for adequate infrastructure funding for projects of statewide benefit that meet the future water needs of all of its citizens.
- The Water Plan should call for development of a “report card” for Bulletin 2008 that will provide an objective evaluation of performance of the state in implementing the Water Plan.
- The Water plan needs to acknowledge and forthrightly address the “elephant in the room” of recurring multi-dry year/droughts conditions. This significant deficiency must be acknowledged in this Water Plan. Even in absence of sophisticated modeling capabilities, this version of the Water Plan should include a qualitative or order-of-magnitude analysis of the water needs of the state under the multi-dry year/drought conditions, and how various resource strategies would address this predictable need.

The concerns that I have outlined in this letter frame the views of both our agricultural and urban members on this water plan. Those views will be repeated and pressed as the documents become increasingly public. Therefore, I request a meeting with you at your earliest convenience to discuss our concerns and explore ways that they can be resolved. It is important that this meeting occur before DWR’s scheduled November 14 release of the next draft to avoid unnecessary conflict over subsequent drafts. Alternatively, this aggressive publication schedule could be slowed down somewhat to allow the key issues to be resolved by your staff.

Michael J. Spear, Interim Director
October 23, 2003
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ACWA and its members want to contribute to a successful outcome for the California Water Plan Update 2003. At this point we believe this can best be accomplished through direct discussions and a clear commitment to address our concerns. Thank you for your immediate attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. K. Hall', followed by a long horizontal line extending to the right.

STEPHEN K. HALL
Executive Director